

[Cause for Separation]

Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff

Accession no.

W 8162

Date received 10/10/40

Consignment no 1

Shipped from Wash. off.

Label

Amount 2 p.

WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' Unit

Form—3 Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title ...Cause for separation [Begin]: I went into the [?]

Place of origin NY Date 4/24/39

Project worker Terry Roth

Project editor

Remarks W8164 Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff 17

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NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ————— Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th Street 152 W. 13th Street

DATE April 24, 1939

SUBJECT Cause For Separation

1. Date and time of interview April 19, 1939
2. Place of interview Furriers Union
3. Name and address of informant Izzie Prevalsky
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

Sam Schwartz

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ————— Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th Street 152 W. 13th Street

DATE April 24, 1939

SUBJECT Cause For Separation

"I went in to the fur business in 1922 and I started to work for a dresser and dyer. It was when I came to this country. My first experience. I started to work there from 7 o'clock in the morning and we worked till 12 at night. Outerwise you get fired. Once I stopped about ten at night, I was tired from working. The boss comes over to me and asks me. "What's the matter you going home?" I told him I'm tired. "Are you sick?" "No. Just tired." "In this place you have to work as everybody else, or not, you're fired."

On account of that he made me come out six o'clock the next morning, till 12 at night. I started off with 18 dollars a week. The place was full of spies there, most of them Italians. And everytime you want to say anything about the union, out you go. Everybody used to spy on you. The foreman came over to me, speaking English. That time I couldn't understand. I told him. "Speak Jewish or Russian. Only those two languages I know." He said something I didn't understand, in English, and I answered him in Russian. So he took a skin and he threw it at me. I went and took a plate of dye and threw it at his face. So I got fired. The boss sees me. "Where are you going?" "I'm fired." So he puts me back to work.

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About six months it got slow in the trade. I was very slim then. Every six months the inspector comes in and cleans out the boiler. So they couldn't pick another man, but they pick me out. To get inside the boiler and chop off the steam from the water that's boiling. I laid there about two weeks from seven to five o'clock and I had an hour for lunch. And I got twenty a week for that. He was doing me a favor for that. When the strike broke out, I figure it's my chance to get in the line and I went in first."

"Once I had an argument with the leadership here which I was very soory on that. I thought: 'Why should I have to suffer so much. I'll do the same thing the others are doing. I'll go to the right union.' I went up there and one fellow comes over to me and said, 'hello' to me. I took a sock at him and I walked right out. I had a few fellows there they knew me, so they protected me. And I came back to the left union."

I had a good experience with my boss. Working with him, this guy used to be afraid of me an awful lot. So when he wanted to do something dirty, he'll come over and pat me on the back. "You're a nice fellow." So I used to do the same thing to him. So he asks me. "Why do you do that to me?" "I'm doing this because you are doing it. You are looking for a place to stab me and I'm looking for the same place."

"Yes," he says, "we both have the same feeling for each other."

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"I got married in 1931. My wife knew some furrier and she went over to him to get me a job because I was out of work a long time. So I came up there the next morning and he asked me for the union book. I took out the Industrial union book which I had all the time. And I

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show it to him. "No, you'll have to get a book of the Right wing union." So I told him. "Since when are you a chairman in the shop?" "We have an agreement," he says, "we couldn't hire anybody except from the Right union." I told him to push his job up somewhere, and I came home. My wife asked what happened. I told her what happened. "I'm not going to take the job." On account of this here, I had to split up with my wife. She said. "If the union means more to you than me ———." I told her. "I'm not going to sell my principles for you or anybody else." Section II 1. (e)

She was a real reactionary. When it used to come election, I want to vote for Amter or for Foster, and she hollers for something else. Her brother was a Zionist and we used to have fist fights in the house used to come election."

"I got myself a job about a month ago. I knew the owner of the place very well. I ask him for a job and he wouldn't refuse me a job for two days a wekk. Thursday and Friday. I used to call it W.P.A. a job Thursday and Friday. Then, after I worked a couple days, he came over to me. "Listen, I want you to do me a favor. See that the union stays away from my shop. That the committee don't come up." He wants to have the Shipping Clerk doing mechanical work. Instead of saying something to him, I took my hat and coat and walked out. I came right back to the office with a complaint to the organizer."

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During the General Strike we had a telephone call here. There's a Shoe shop on strike on 28th Street and we had a call, gangsters are there. We don't like gangsters should be in the fur market. So we went out to chase them from the market and we had a fight with them. A policeman gets ahead of me and he wants to hit me with a club. Well. I was faster than him and I hit him first, and he had me locked up on \$500 bail. We came into the station house, they ask my name. He says to me. How do you spell it? I didn't want to give

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him the satisfaction so I told him, "I don't know how to spell my name, I know only how to sign my name." I was going to put up a fight with him. I told him, "After all, you're supposed to protect me." So I did not spell my name. I came over in front of the Desk Lieutenant, he asks me to spell it. "I don't know how to spell my name." I was brought up to court and they locked me up there. I had a bad case that time and I tried to straighten out with the judge in a nice way. I told him. "I made a mistake. I didn't mean to do it, but instead, the cops wants to lock me up." The policeman was so nervous he couldn't speak. The judge asked him whether he feels sick. He said, "Yes." So he postponed the case. He had an understanding with my lawyer to change the charges. Then, on the witness stand, he started to testify against me that I hit him. So the judge told him. "What did you do about it?" "I couldn't do anything." He had witnesses. The two gangsters from the shoe store which we had them locked up too. And the judge wouldn't accept that as good witnesses because they had records, and the case was thrown out. After, the cop went over to my lawyer and he asked him I shouldn't bother him on the market if I see him." Beliefs & Customs - Folkstuff

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Place of origin N.Y. Date 4/24/39

Project worker Terry Roth

Project editor

Remarks Form A